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February 14, 2005

The Honorable John Cornyn
United States Senate
517 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cornyn:

I am writing on behalf of the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies ("AAN") in support of the Open Government Act of 2005. AAN represents 119 alternative weeklies in the U.S., including newspapers like the *Austin Chronicle*, *Dallas Observer* and *Washington City Paper*.

Our members place a strong emphasis on covering government issues and providing readers with important information about the performance of public officials and institutions. Your bill will enhance their ability to serve readers by adding important new measures to the Freedom of Information Act. Many of our member papers utilize the service of freelance reporters, so we were particularly impressed by the provision in your bill establishing criteria that would allow freelance journalists to get a break on FOIA search fees.

AAN strongly endorses the Open Government Act of 2005. Thank you for introducing this bill to Congress.

Best regards

Richard Karpel
Executive Director